(b) whether the impact would be more industrial slowdown; and

(c) what is the remedial policy?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI SIKANDER BAKHT): (a) sanctions have been announced by some developed countries particularly USA. Loans/guarantees/insurance from US Exim Bank and OPIC would no longer be forthcoming. However, some of the loans by multilateral agencies which had been deferred have recently been approved.

(b) Though no significant impact is expected on the overall industrial production some infrastructure industries could be affected. The projects in the Power sector are not likely to be adversely affected. In telecom sector, it is expected that the cost of borrowing might rise.

(c) In conformity with the current policy of the Government various measures have been initiated to encourage foreign direct investment and investment by non-resident Indians and foreign institutional investors.

Construction cost index for project Planning

2181. SHRI S. RAMACHANDRAN PILLAI: Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the construction industry has petitioned to Government for creation of a new construction cost index that would help in accurate project planning; and

(b) if so, reaction of Government thereof?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI SIKNDER BAKHT): (a) no such petition was received either in this Ministry or Ministry of Urban Development.

(b) Does not arise.

Intellectual property rights

2182. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the present Government propose to have a fresh lock at issues relating to intellectual property rights and the patent regime;

(b) if so, whether the Government have found any bottle-necks in the IPR and patent regime;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the reasons for giving a fresh look on these issues?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI SIKANDER BAKHT): (a) and (d) The Government is not aware of any bottle-necks in the Intellectual Property Right and patent regime. However, the Government has been taking steps from time to time to modernise the intellectual property administration to improve the quality of services provided to the users of the system.

Setting up of Venture Capital Fund

2183. SHRI JALALUDIN ANSARI: SHRI J. CHITHARANJAN:

Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Chairman of the Public Enterprises selection Board has suggested setting up of a Rs. 100 crore Venture Capital Fund to help Indian companies and scientists to get patents in the USA and other developed countries; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI SIKANDER BAKHT): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

भारतीय सीमेंट निगम के गोदामों से सीमेंट का नुकसान

2184. श्री राघवजी: क्या उद्योग मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:

(क) क्या यह सच है कि वर्ष 1996-97, 1997-98 और 1998-99 के दौरान भारतीय सीमेंट निगम के गोदामों में से करोड़ों रुपए के सीमेंट की चोरी का पता चला था;

(ख) यदि हां, तो तत्संबंधी ब्यौरा क्या है;

(ग) क्या चोरी की उक्त घटनाओं की जांच की गई है;

(घ) यदि हां, तो जांच के क्या परिणाम निकले हैं;

(ङ) क्या इसमें भारतीय सीमेंट निगम के कोई अधिकारी दोषी पाये गये हैं; और

(च) यदि हां, तो ऐसे अधिकारी कौन-कौन से हैं?

उद्योग मंत्री (श्री सिकन्दर बख्त): (क) वर्ष 1996-97, 1997-98 तथा 1998-99 के दौरान, सीमेंट कारपोरेशन ऑफ इंडिया के गोदाम से सीमेंट की चोरी की किसी घटना की कोई रिपोर्ट ध्यान में नहीं आई है।

(ख) से (घ) प्रश्न नहीं उठता।

Utilisation of NRF resources

2185. SHRI JIBON ROY: Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to a news-item which appeared in "The Financial Express" (New Delhi) dated the 15th June, 1998 under the caption "Government makes a feast with NRF resources while deserving PSUs starve" and

(b) the Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI SIKANDER BAKHT): (a) and (b) The news-item referred to by the Hon'ble Member, refers to a recent scrutiny of the functioning of National Renewal Fund by the Comptroller and Auditor General of India. This report is being examined in consultation with the departments concerned of the Government.

Investment limit in small Scale Sector

2186. SHRI RAHASBIHARI BARIK:
SHRI BHAGABAN MAJHI:

Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have decreased the investment limit in the small scale sector;

(b) if so, the deails thereof;

(c) whether Government are aware that the modernisation, expansion of small scale sector will suffer thereafter; and

(d) if so, the steps taken by Government for improvement/ modernisation/expansion of small scale sector?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI SIKANDER BAKHT): (a) to (c) The Prime Minister announced at the Laghu Udyog Bharti function held on 29.4.98 that the investment limit for a SSI unit would be reduced from Rs. 3 crores to Rs. 1 crore. Care would be taken to see that modernisation/expension of the small scale sector does not suffer.

(d) For facilitating improvement/ modernisation/expansion of the small scale sector, several Government assisted schemes are being implemented. Small Industries Development Bank of India also provides financial assistance liberally for modernisation under their Technology Development and Modernisation Fund Scheme.

Scientists against International Patents Act

2187. SHRI K.M. SAIFULLAH:
SHRI YERRA NARA-YANASWAMY:
DR. Y. LAKSHMI PRASAD:

Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether representations have been received from scientists against the International Patents Act in India to file criminal charges against piracy;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the action proposed in this sregard?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI SIKANDER BAKHT): (a) to (c) No, Sir. There is no International Patents Act. Patents are granted by Governments under their respective patents laws. Violation of patent rights is challenged under those laws by the affected parties.